

"Melissa! Are you packed? It is time to go," said Mother.

"Yes, I am, Mother," said Melissa. "I can't wait to get on the plane. I packed blue jeans and some cowboy boots. I borrowed the boots from Susan."

Soon Melissa was on the plane. Then she was flying high above New York City. She looked down and saw the tops of tall skyscrapers. They did not look so big from the air. She began to think of the mountains in Montana.

Gran and Papa lived on a small ranch. It was near the city of Great Falls. They had ten acres of land--small for a ranch. But to Melissa, who lived in an apartment with her mother, it was as big as Central Park!

Papa had five horses. He and Gran liked to ride on the ranch. Melissa's favorite horse was Lady Skylark. She was honey-colored and graceful. Melissa had not visited her grandparents since Christmas. She worried. Would Lady Skylark remember her? She would run out to the barn when she got to the ranch. Lady Skylark loved sugar cubes and apples. Melissa would take her some. Maybe they would become very good friends again.

Melissa stepped off the plane. She saw Papa waiting for her. She rushed down the ramp to his welcoming arms. Gran was waiting outside with the car. She whisked them home to the ranch.

They pulled into the driveway. Melissa saw the ranch house. It was at the top of the hill. It was made of red brick and had big windows to see the mountains.

Melissa unpacked her clothes. She put on blue jeans and a white cotton shirt. She also wore the cowboy boots. Papa smiled when he

saw her outfit. "I'm glad you brought boots," he said. "We are going on a picnic for lunch today. That will mean a trail ride, too, of course."

"May I ride Lady Skylark?" asked Melissa. "If she will let you," said Papa. "She may not remember you."

Melissa was so sad. Gran tried to cheer her up. "Help me pack lunch," she said. Melissa wrapped the sandwiches in plastic bags. Gran packed fruit and crackers.

When she went to the barn, Melissa took three cubes of sugar. She held them out for Lady Skylark but the horse did not pay her any attention. Then she slowly sniffed at Melissa's hand. Finally she ate all of the sugar cubes and even licked Melissa's hand clean!

Melissa was so happy that she jumped up and down. She knew she had won her friend back. "I think this will be the best vacation ever," she said, smiling at her grandparents.

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